



# ARMY LOGISTICIAN

MARCH-APRIL 1979



Assistant Secretary  
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## ABOUT THE COVER

Data from computers, such as the one at Red River Army Depot, pictured on the cover, link the actions required in filling a customer's requisition. The story, beginning on page 2, explains why occasionally the supply "cupboard" may be bare and what is being done about it.

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*Army Logistician* is devoted to the publication of timely, authoritative information on Army and Defense logistics for the Active Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, civilian employees of the Army, and the public. Our purpose is to increase knowledge and understanding of logistics and to encourage and stimulate innovative thought in areas of logistics by providing a forum for those ideas. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

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# On Successful Command

by Lieutenant Colonel Leo J. Pigaty

**S**uccessful commanders usually have several things in common, but you will most usually find at least these two: complete dedication to their unit and total concern for their people. Also, some commanders seem to more quickly identify important things and be better at organizing their efforts. For them, hard work seems to produce better results than for some others.

To try and help the hard work of all to pay better dividends, the following thoughts on commanding a support battalion may help—

- **The customer—**
  - Customers should be supported, not policed.
  - There can never be too much face-to-face dialog with commanders that you support.
- **The unit—**
  - Set high standards after an initial adjustment period. They will generate good discipline and high morale.
  - Junior commanders will most often favor use of the velvet glove approach to that of the iron fist.
  - A vigorous physical training program will improve any unit.
  - Self-help will produce more timely facilities improvements than will work orders.
- **The mission—**
  - Clean, neat work areas usually indicate professional work.
  - Jobs get old because requisitions “go bad.”
  - Requisitions “go bad” because people make mistakes.
  - People make mistakes because supervisors don’t check.
- **The leader—**
  - Must apply self-discipline to tackle unpleasant tasks quickly and see them through.
  - Must recognize that subordinates who try and convince supervisors that a mission is impossible are trying to condition them to accept failure.
  - Must accept the fact that “slot machine” management won’t work. Pulling the lever and taking one’s chances maximizes the chance of failure. Writing a list of measurable objectives and keying on results increases the chance of getting cherries instead of lemons.
  - Must measure the value of effort by what is produced.

None of the suggestions listed will work all of the time, but they will most of the time. Problems of command are situational; however, the suggestions fit a lot of situations. A final thought: the smart commander takes advantage of others’ experiences.

Why not read the list again?

*Lieutenant Colonel Leo J. Pigaty recently completed a 3-year assignment in Europe where he commanded the 1st Maintenance Battalion, VII Corps. He is currently attending the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.*



Mobile Kitchen Trailer—page 24.



Cure for Battery Waste—page 17.